



INTEGRITY AGENCIES GROUP

DRAFT MINUTES

Tuesday, 12 November 2024 | 2:00pm – 3:30pm | Wiradjuri Room, Treasury Building

Attendees

In person:

Dr Gordon de Brouwer PSM	Australian Public Service Commissioner (Chair)
Dr Rachel Bacon	Deputy Commissioner, Australian Public Service Commission
Ms Katherine Jones PSM	Secretary, Attorney-General's Department
Dr Caralee McLeish PSM	Auditor-General
The Hon Paul Brereton AM RFD SC	National Anti-Corruption Commissioner
Mr Martin Hehir	Deputy Secretary, Prime Minister and Cabinet
Ms Angela Barrett	COO, Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission
Ms Nicole Pearson	A/g CEO, Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
Ms Jamie Lowe	Merit Protection Commissioner
Mr Chris Jessup	Inspector-General Intel and Security
Mr Ian McCartney	Acting Australian Federal Police Commissioner

Via Microsoft Teams:

Mr Hugh De Krester	President, Australian Human Rights Commission
Ms Sarah Bendall	Acting Commonwealth Ombudsman
Ms Raelene Sharp	Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions
Mr Troy Grant	Inspector-General of Water Compliance
Ms Ruth Owen	Inspector General of Taxation and Taxation Ombudsman
Ms Elizabeth Tydd	Australian Information Commissioner



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Secretariat:

Ms Kylie Barber

Assistant Commissioner, Integrity Performance and
Employment Policy, Australian Public Service Commission

Ms Clare McLean

Director, Integrity and Ethics, Australian Public Service
Commission

Item 1 – Welcome from Chair, and minutes and action items from previous meeting

- 1.1 The Chair provided an Acknowledgement of Country.
- 1.2 The Chair welcomed members, new members and first-time attendees to the group and the Chair **noted** the apologies.
- 1.3 Members endorsed the IAG Meeting minutes from 9 August 2024 meeting with no changes.

Item 2 – Update: Australian Public Service Commission (APSC)

- 2.1 Dr Bacon updated members on progress of APS Stage 2 reforms, including public consultations on integrity initiatives.
- 2.2 Dr Bacon also shared reflections from her recent attendance at an OECD forum, including observations from international colleagues of the common tension of heightened community expectations of public services, including integrity matters, with budget constraints and increased external scrutiny.
- 2.3 The APSC has launched a major project to optimise its statutory role by strengthening the promotion, assurance and monitoring of its policy frameworks to enhance support for agency heads as employers, through increasing focus on upstream preventative work.
- 2.4 Ms Barber also sought the interest of members in a small working group to explore synergies in integrity education priorities and identifying potential collaborative efforts.

Item 3 – Update: Australian National Audit Office (ANAO)

- 3.1 Ms Caralee McLeish introduced herself and shared her priorities as the new Auditor-General of Australia, including upholding Commonwealth integrity through governance and methodological advancements.
- 3.2 Ms McLeish indicated upcoming audit program for 2025, including



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recommendations to foster behavioural improvements.

- 3.3 Ms McLeish also noted recent thematic and specific observations from individual ANAO reports including poor procurement practices in the Australian Passport Office.

Item 4 – Update: National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC)

- 4.1 Commissioner Brereton provided updates on the NACC's current program of work, noting data of recent referrals and investigations, and outlined forthcoming guidance products including corruption risks in election activities, conflict of interest and ethical decision-making.
- 4.2 Commissioner Brereton outlined plans for Anti-Corruption Day (9 December 2024), including a seminar and public messaging.
- 4.3 Commissioner Brereton also referred to the NACC Inspector-General's recent report findings on the NACC's response to referrals from the Robodebt inquiry and provided an update on the NACC's response.
- 4.4 Commissioner Brereton also canvassed early insights from the inaugural Commonwealth Integrity Survey.

Item 5 – Attorney-General's Department (AGD)

- 5.1 Secretary Jones provided an update on the current work of the Capability and Workforce Committee in building psychological safety in the APS workforce.
- 5.2 This work responds to recommendations of the Louder than Words Action Plan to address agency capability with regard to 'speak-up' culture, and includes developing materials to support agency-level awareness, communication, and monitoring.
- 5.3 Secretary Jones also indicated the development of a Commonwealth Integrity Strategy is ongoing and foreshadowed that AGD will consult with integrity agencies on the draft strategy at relevant stages as it progresses.

Item 6 – Group Discussion: Transparency and Accountability

- 6.1 The Chair facilitated an open discussion on strategies for transparency of integrity agency functions in an environment of heightened public scrutiny.
- 6.2 Members shared their experiences with discretionary public disclosure and balancing transparency with maintaining necessary confidentiality to ensure operational integrity.
- 6.3 Members discussed tension between fostering public trust and confidence while safeguarding employee privacy and wellbeing, and the need for tailored



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transparency approaches based on specific statutory requirements.

Item 7 – Other Business

No additional business was raised.



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Appendix 1

ACTIONS

Item	Action	Members(s)	Status
2	Australian Public Service Commission to convene education priorities/activities working group	APSC	Outstanding
4	National Anti-Corruption Commission to share Anti-Corruption Day materials with members	NACC	Outstanding
5	AGD to consult on draft integrity strategy content with Member agencies at the appropriate time	AGD	Outstanding



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Appendix 2

Meeting summary for publication on APSC website

Meeting date: 12 November 2024

At the 12 November 2024 Integrity Agencies Group meeting, the Group discussed:

- Updates on APS integrity reforms, education initiatives, and upstream preventative efforts.
- Recent audit findings and their implications for Commonwealth integrity.
- NACC investigations and strategies for promoting ethical decision-making.
- Challenges and strategies for ensuring transparency amidst heightened scrutiny.